The MCC Cross

You may have seen this symbol around people's necks or on the front altar cloth at church. Have you ever wondered just what it meant - what was the meaning of the various symbols?

It is not a new combination. In fact it dates from the very earliest days of Christianity and is found in many churches other than MCC.

In the centre you will see two letters which look like PX - these are Greek letters ....

X - written in English
CHI - pronounced CH

P - written in English
RHO - pronounced R

Put them together and you have the abbreviation of "CHRISTOS" - Christ - "The anointed of the Lord."

Perhaps the most famous organization that has used this symbol is Holy Name Society of the Roman Catholic Church. The members used to wear this symbol in their lapels to honour Christ and tried to use the name of our Saviour in honour rather than dishonour, as is the way of our modern world far too often. This Society is almost extinct but let us all remember and honour one of its ideals - "That in the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." (Phillipians 2:10)

For the other two symbols we have to turn to the Book of Revelations where we read in the 1st Chapter, "I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty." Later in the same chapter we read "Fear not. I am the first and the last." The letters look like this:

Α Alpha
the 1st letter of the Greek alphabet

Ω Omega
the last letter of the Greek alphabet

We put them all together, they spell Christ, first and last. And when we wear the MCC cross, we proclaim that Jesus, the Christ, in whom we trust, is first in our lives, last in our lives, and all the way in between. Let us wear it with pride, to proclaim our allegiance to Christ; and let us wear it humbly, recognizing our weakness, which can be made strong in Christ.
(Reprinted from The Way, MCC Hartford, Connecticut)

the Nine Signs of Alcoholism

1. Increase in alcohol tolerance.
   "I can drink them all under the table."

2. Occasional or partial memory lapses.
   "Did I really do that last night?"

3. Drinking beyond one's intentions.
   "Boy! did I get smashed! Should have eaten something."

4. Increased dependence upon alcohol.
   "Can't wait... got to have a quickie."
5. Sneaking drinks.
   "Needed that extra one... Who's to know?"
6. Preoccupation with alcohol.
   "Election day tomorrow... better pick up a bottle."
7. Resentful whenever one's drinking is discussed.
   "It's none of their business... I can handle it."
8. Gulp drinks.
   "Gulp... ah! I needed that."
9. Rationalizing loss of control.
   "If they had my problems, they'd drink too."

IF YOU HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE, YOU MAY HAVE A DRINKING PROBLEM
AND SHOULD SEEK GUIDANCE

AIDS: A Gay Man's

By Reverend Steve Pieters

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In the midst of all this glamor and excitement, I have lost more friends to AIDS than I care to count. Funerals and memorial services are as regular as Sunday worship.

I've been through a rough experimental chemotherapy (suramin), which burned out my adrenal glands and nearly killed me in October, then caused neurological damage, leaving me quite weak and helpless in February.

But I have fought back, and God has graced me once again with good health, energy, and strength. I have been off suramin now for four months.

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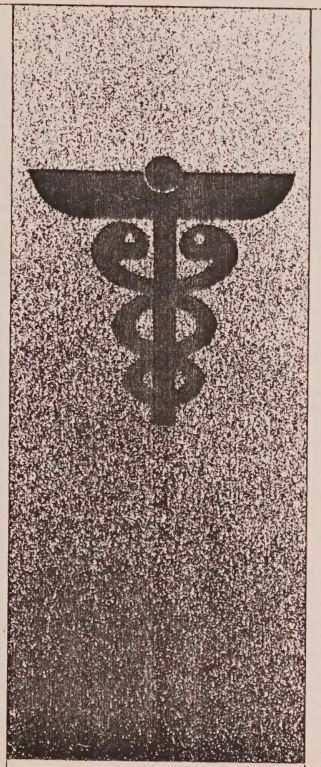

I was ecstatic: at last I had a lover, someone to live with and love with, someone to share in my adventure of living with AIDS.

It worked for a while. But by July it was apparent that we were both very unhappy with the situation. I remember feeling that life is too short to be involved in something as destructive as this relationship.

When he moved out in August, we cried in each other's arms.

For quite a while after, I continued to grieve the passing of my romantic illusions. And out of this grief process, I hope I have come to a healthy acceptance of being single, and a healthier attitude towards relationships. But I got what I wanted: I had a lover, for a while. Another prayer was answered, and I learned a lot!

But the most important lessons have been in facing pain, fear and stigma. I have begun to learn to transform these difficult realities of having AIDS.

I am learning to translate these experiences into creative opportunities, chances to transcend the deadly destructive attitudes around me as a person with AIDS into living, growing experiences.

One of the things that I have feared the most is dying alone. I faced that fear in October, 1985, when I found myself hovering near death in the "Red Blanket Room" (or Emergency Triage) of LA County Hospital.

I had been deteriorating for about a month, losing weight, energy and strength.

The doctors in charge of the experimental protocol had just discovered that my adrenal glands were failing, and they ordered my immediate hospitalization to receive cortisone treatments, which were supposed to recover my energy, strength and appetite, or, in other words, save my life. They didn't make it clear how serious the situation, nor did I understand until later how rapidly I was failing.

I checked into the emergency room where I was lost for three hours. When they finally "found" me, I was in x-ray for another hour.

When I was wheeled into triage, instead of administering the cortisone as ordered, the Red Blanket Room doctors took my history orally three times (it was now 1-2 a.m.), and argued about whether my x-ray seemed to show signs of pneumocystis, the AIDS-related pneumonia.

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Health Experience

Clergy-on-Staff MCC in the Valley

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And on one exhale, I let go, and there was no pain. I floated peacefully. I felt a peace that I cannot explain.

I felt an awareness of my Self. I felt God's presence in a way that was very familiar, yet more complete than I had ever felt before. Everything felt perfect, and I was at rest. Nothing mattered, except that peace.

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The doctors later told me I almost died, and I believe I was slipping away in that moment of peace. And I was alone, without friends or family.

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What a feeling of victory. I have faced my greatest fear, and found the love of God there. I still get scared, but now when I experience fear in myself or others, I try to meet it with that sense of God's love and peace that I experienced that night in October, and I find I get through that moment. People even call me courageous!

I have been scared to death, but now I like to think of myself as being scared to life.

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He pointed out that many of us fall down in fear and trembling when we experience the touch of the Divine. And when God touches us with healing, or a sense of wholeness, or even a call, instead of being scared to death, hopefully we will be scared to life.

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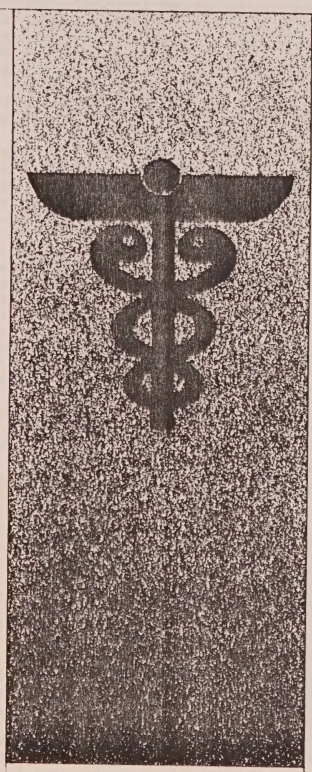

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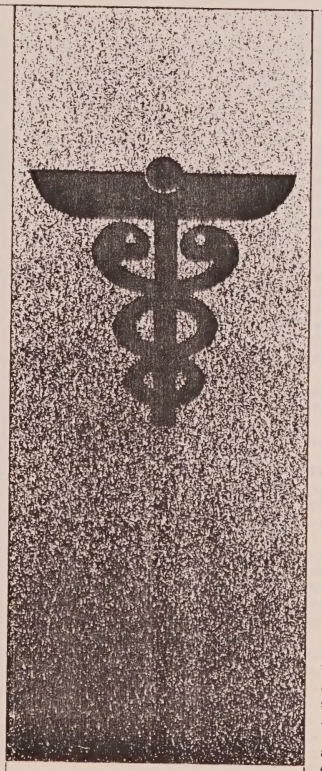

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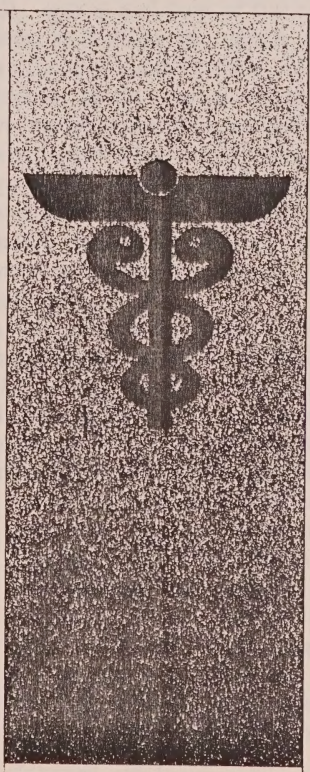

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TALKING LIBERATION

Sometimes we find that people don't know what we're talking about when we used terms that have currency in the Gay Community; for all of you who have asked we supply this glossary.

HOMOSEXUAL: To have an erotic preference for members of one's own sex.

LESBIAN: Being woman-identified in one's affectional, sexual and social preferences, if one is a woman.

CLOSET: A small or enclosed room used primarily for storage, unfortunately used by many as a place of hiding from the realities of life; closetedness implies an attempt to conceal one's gayness from the world.

GAY: Being "gay" means having freed oneself of misgivings over being homosexual; it means being free to investigate one's preferences and desires in sexual roles as one chooses without having to justify or account for it. (Weinberg)

GAY IDENTITY: A positive perception of oneself as a homosexual free of shame, guilt, regret and free of the need for self-inquisition and then joining with other gay people to form community.

GAY PRIDE: Positive gay identification; used by gay activists to describe the political, social, economic and personal changes which gay people have made in themselves and society since the late 1960's.

HOMOPHOBIA: A word coined by George Weinberg (Society and the Healthy Homosexual) for prejudice against homosexuals, defined as "the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals, and in the case of homosexuals themselves, self-loathing. Also, the revulsion toward homosexuals and often the desire to inflict punishment as retribution."

HOMOPHOBE: Dr. Alice Fennessey, Columbia University, has found that most homophobes (see above definition) are largely white, predominantly male, mostly married, largely lower class, most often parents, and often violent. This violence tends to be directed toward those targets most available, obvious, and least able to defend themselves.

HOMOSEXUAL OPPRESSION: Three layers of penalty operate in society's homophobic oppression:

1. The overt penalties such as being fired from employment, imprisoned, expelled from family, church, housing, or being confined and/or treated as mentally ill.
2. The constant insecurity of knowing that overt penalties may be invoked. These penalties often apply only until the hiding is over. Their real cause is to keep people hiding what homophobes do not choose to deal with or which frighten them.
3. The repression of awareness of the homosexual parts of oneself and the substitution of a facade of heterosexuality in self and society. (Marcia Geyer: Homophobia and Human Rights.)

OPPRESSION SICKNESS: The internalization of homophobic attitudes by gay/lesbian people and the embodiment of those negative feelings in self-destructive acts, neurotic and self-defeating behavior (suicide, alcoholism, drug-abuse, etc.) and lateral hostility toward gay/lesbian people and other oppressed groups.

LATERAL OPPRESSION: The invoking of penalties, repression and sanctions by one oppressed group against another oppressed group; i.e. repression of women by gay men, blacks by gays, women by black men, people of color by white women, etc.

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TALKING LIBERATION (Continued)

GHETTOIZATION: A form of gay oppression, which takes its origin from an Eastern European term which referred to quarters inhabited by Jews by requirement and enforcement, now used for any section of a city in which an oppressed group is confined (either by regulation or by social pressure); often a neglected and run down section which oppressed people take over as their own and occupy so that the community reflects their lifestyle, but often an enforced segregation from the larger society.

GENTRIFICATION: The willing take-over of a run-down area by middle and upper class people; reclaiming a slum area -- unfortunately often pushing out poorer inhabitants by escalating property values beyond their ability to afford housing in the area. However, gays have often been able to reclaim abandoned areas in a positive way that does not damage other oppressed people. (Suggestion for downtown Mobile, anyone??)

THE HOLOCAUST: (Biblical) A burnt offering. Used of the Hitler regime's annihilation of 6,000,000 Jews, Gypsies, Gays, political dissidents and other oppressed people whom Hitler destroyed in a wide-ranging rampage of personal hatred of people he identified as "other" or "different."

GAY LIBERATION: The demand for full opportunity for integration (whether we take it or not) of our whole selves into the large society along the lines of our choosing and talents, and for the same privileges and protections to be extended to the relationships, organizations, and institutions of gay and lesbian people as are extended to the heterosexual's relationships, organizations, and institutions. (Geyer)

HOMOPHILE: A lover of gay people; the desire to be with, enjoy the association with gay/lesbian people in a positive environment.

HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT: Used especially of the early Gay Rights Movement, dating as early as 1897 in the U.S. and especially in the 1920's in Germany, France and Scandinavian countries -- predates Stonewall by many years.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION: (Sometimes called Feminism). In 1838, Sarah Moore Grimke, later to be one of the leading abolitionists with Angelina Grimke Weld, said, "I ask no favors for my sex, all I ask of my brethren is that they take their feet from off our necks." The social, civil, religious, and sexual equality of women; social justice and freedom from fear for all women. Many lesbians feel that their issues are best addressed by women's liberation.

ACTIVIST: A person who accepts personal responsibility for making changes in a social group based upon a philosophy of economic, social, moral and political awareness and then acting upon those beliefs.

(continued)

MCC AT MOBILE TO CELEBRATE THIRD ANNIVERSARY

MCC at Mobile isn't the new kid on the block any more. We have been in Mobile for three years now and have grown to 43 members in that time.

On Saturday, March 12th, MCC at Mobile will celebrate with our annual Anniversary Banquet and Awards Ceremony. This year the dinner will be held at the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship with a cash bar preceding the dinner. The bar opens at 7:00 and dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m. Dinner will be catered.

Following the dinner, awards will be presented to the Member of the Year, to the person who has performed oustanding service for others (the Deacon's Award), and certificates of appreciation will be presented to church members who have contributed time and effort to the growth of the church.

Additionally, community members will be honored with certificates for community service. Among the honorees is Jim Ferels of the National AIDS Network for his efforts in obtaining an AIDS education grant for Mobile, and a one thousand dollar grant for the Buddy Program.

The dinner is open to anyone who wishes to attend, the charge being $10.00

The speaker for the evening will be Rev. Jimmy Brock, pastor of Joy Metropolitan Community Church in Orlando, Florida. Rev. Brock used to be a Southern Baptist pastor in Mobile and Pensacola and is now with MCC. He is a very entertaining and dynamic speaker. You will enjoy him.

The first Friday of every month, MCC gets together for a potluck supper and a movie. The movie this month will be "Women in Love," and the supper is served at 7:00 p.m. You will enjoy the fun and the fellowship. A $3.00 charge is made, proceeds going to the support of the church.

On Joe Cain Day, Sunday, February 14th, MCC will open the building at 10:30 for people to join us for a substantial breakfast before the Joe Cain Day festivities. Charge for the breakfast is $2.00. Come and enjoy and have fun with us before you go out for the day.

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Ken Jones died of AIDS January 13, 1988. He was MCC at Mobile's first deacon and a constant strength and support to the leadership of this church. Ken could and did provoke controversy, but he always made us think, and often made us think about our faith. He will be missed. A memorial service for him is planned for February 19th, at 7:00 p.m. Ken coined the acronym GLAD for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District which used to be DS

BUDDY BUILDING TO BE DROP-IN CENTER FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS

Beginning Saturday, February 20th the Buddy Building at 1600 Center Street will be open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for people living with AIDS to drop in for conversation, a nourishing lunch, and relaxation. There is no charge, and people are invited to come by and make themselves comfortable. You will be asked no questions, the Buddies will be there to serve lunch and clean up, and if you need advice, etc., people will be around to talk to. People with AIDS are invited to talk with each other, network, and compare notes, if that's what they want to do. It's your day -- we're providing the space for you to use it as you choose. TV, games, cards, etc. will be available.

Ken Jones died of AIDS January 13, 1988. He was MCC at Mobile's first deacon and a constant strength and support to the leadership of this church. He was also our first lay delegate to our District. On a trip to District Conference Ken coined the acronym GLAD for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District, which used to be SAD, the South Atlantic District. Ken felt that no Christian should be SAD, and additionally wanted to remind the Fellowship that we had churches on the Gulf Ken could and did provoke controversy, but he always made us think, and often made us think about our faith. He will be missed. A memorial service for him is planned for February 19th at 7:00 p.m.

BUDDY TRAINING is held every 3rd Monday of the month. If you would like to be a Buddy or attend a Buddy Training Program, please call us at 476-9142 and we will plan a time for you to attend and find out more about what the Buddies do for people with AIDS. Care for the Caretaker is a program to help provide emotional support for the buddies who are caring for people with AIDS.

1600 Center Street, Mobile, AL 36604

476-9142

THE CATHOLIC CENTER
Archdiocese of Mobile
400 Government St., P. O. Box 1966, Mobile, Alabama 36633, (205) 433-2241

January 28, 1988

Reverend Marge Ragona
Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile
1600 Center Street
Mobile, Alabama 36604

Dear Reverend Ragona:

I would like to acknowledge your comments and do appreciate your sending me a copy of your letter to the editor with respect to the article by Vivian Cannon in the January 19th issue of The Mobile Register on our annual Catholic Charities Appeal.

There was no intention on my part, and certainly not on the part of anyone who spoke at the press conference, to denigrate the Mobile Metropolitan Community Church which is on the cutting edge of outreach and ministry to those touched by AIDS, whether directly or through family or other association. My observations with respect to our endorsement of your faith community were made against a background of several other entities mentioned in the press conference (St. Mary's Home, Little Sisters of the Poor, Catholic Social Services, etc.) which are not only endorsed by our Church but are in fact officially sponsored and in large part funded by us. For reasons of obvious dissimilarity in both religious principles and practice, I felt it entirely in order to make a remark which would clarify a relationship that might easily have been misunderstood.

Certainly those of your faith persuasion are to be commended and supported in their compassionate consideration for and treatment of those who have a special need for acceptance and care. I am sure that the wider community of the Metropolitan Community Church is aware of serious and substantial efforts on behalf of AIDS victims by the Catholic Church in such large centers as New York and San Francisco. To the extent that our circumstances and resources permit it in our area, we stand with you in doing our best to alleviate the human dimension of pain and suffering that touches AIDS victims locally.

Faithfully in Christ,

+Oscar H. Lipscomb

Most Reverend Oscar H. Lipscomb
Archbishop of Mobile

+OHL/k

A Gay Witness to Pope John Paul II

TO ITS SURPRISE, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches received an invitation to participate in the ecumenical prayer service led by Pope John Paul II at Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia, South Carolina, during his recent visit to the U.S. The invitation, issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, offered us the chance to participate in the clergy procession as well as the subsequent "Day of Dialogue" with Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity; Bishop James Crumley of the Lutheran Church in America; and other ecumenical leaders.

The surprise was due to the fact that our denomination has a special ministry to gays and lesbians. We are well aware of the Vatican's negative stance on homosexuality, and that Dignity International (the organization for gay and lesbian Catholics) was not invited to any papal events. It seemed strange to us that our first contact ever with the bishops would be this invitation. Indeed, the invitation may have been a mistake—though one organizer of the prayer service at Columbia told us it was not. In any case, our presence was never mentioned publicly, or acknowledged in any of the literature concerning the event. Perhaps MCC fell into the category of "the other groups" cited in the program.

Many of our gay sisters and brothers, so hurt and angered by the Roman Catholic Church, would probably not understand why we accepted the invitation. But we felt it was important to make a witness.

The "Day of Dialogue" offered us litte chance for dialogue, however. Presentations by Willebrands and Crumley left time for only three questions from the audience. (Since many of the invited guests represented denominations that had been engaged in bilateral discussions with the Roman Catholic Church, it occurred to us that we were included in the group because of MCC's formal discussion with the National Council of Churches.) I did get the chance to introduce myself informally to Cardinal Willebrands, though it was unclear whether he grasped the nature of our denomination. There was no time to continue the conversation.

Before the prayer service we crowded into a waiting room for about four hours with other Catholics and Protestants, national leaders and local pastors. During that time we renewed old acquaintances and made new friends—and experienced the full range of responses to our lapel buttons that stated "God is Greater than AIDS."

Troy D. Perry, the founder of the MCC, and I carried with us in that clergy procession the hopes and fears, rage and pain of millions of gay and lesbian Catholics—those who are now members of MCC; those who are not in any church; and those who are trying to remain faithful Roman Catholics. We also represented those who are living and dying with AIDS, knowing that it is largely homophobic hysteria that has tragically impeded adequate research, treatment, education, justice and compassion. And we carried with us the blessed assurance that perseverance, time and the Holy Spirit are on our side. As people come to know us, homophobic fear is healed.

There were some special ironies in the service of the word at Columbia. The first reading, delivered by Helen Hayes, was from Ruth 1:14-17. For us in MCC, and for gays and lesbians everywhere, that Scripture is a poignant story of the deep commitment of one woman to another. We have always smiled inwardly when the church uses it so glibly and uncritically for heterosexual marriage ceremonies, without ever acknowledging the context. We are reclaiming it as a Scripture for ourselves, and we use it especially in commitment ceremonies for lesbians.

The second Scripture passage had equal impact on us. John Paul himself read from Matthew 12:46-50, which

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

concerns itself with Jesus' relation to his biological family. His mother and brothers come to see him, obviously concerned about the direction of his ministry. Jesus redefines his family, saying that it is comprised of those who "do the will of my Heavenly Parent." The Holy Father used this passage to talk about the need to "defend" the traditional, biological family. He spoke eloquently but predictably. However, the Scriptures themselves critiqued his message: clearly Jesus was in conflict with his family of origin, a conflict that was not resolved until he was hanging on a cross. I felt my spirit wearied and insulted by the implication that, as a lesbian, I am antifamily, or that I don't have or am not part of a family. Never mind that I am a daughter, a sister, an aunt and a niece; a spouse in a committed relationship for ten years; a godmother; and a pastor to a local congregation (and to a worldwide MCC family). My family does not fit neatly into Pope John Paul's narrow definition.

Who are your brothers and sisters, John Paul? According to Jesus, our brothers and sisters are all who do God's will, a point the pope seems to know except when it comes to my people. John Paul, you have many lesbian sisters and gay brothers who are striving to follow Jesus, to live lives of justice, mercy and love. That was what Jesus said to us—and that we should not be surprised when our families include the unlikely ones, the poor, the socially outcast and those labeled "sinners."

GAY PEOPLE know the stresses of modern family life though we are no more the cause of them or the product of them than are any other Christians. Our children experience all the pressures of modern American adolescence. Our relationships suffer the same pressures as heterosexual marriages, and we need the same church support.

As the pope blessed perhaps 100 or so children that day, I prayed especially for the 10 per cent of them who will grow up to be gay or lesbian. How will they look back on that amazing historic day? I want them to know that *we were there* too, blessing them in our hearts, praying for them, and for the heterosexual children as well, that they might grow up in a world that is safer, kinder; where, in Peter Maurin's words, "it is easier for people to be good." Will they be able to count on you, Holy Father, or on your successor, when they grow up? Will their only choice be either to hide in closets of fear or to leave the Catholic Church?

For us, John Paul's message that day mostly missed the mark—except when he spoke so movingly about the cross of Christ. At times, his message was a cross for us to bear; but we, too, believe in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. And we know that in time even the Roman Catholic Church will repent of the sins it visits on our people, and that the church will embrace its gay and lesbian sons and daughters.

Nancy L. Wilson.

O Boy

YOU
popping out of the school bus
like a bug out of a bottle
running across the grass
loose from verbs and nouns
in the green afternoon full of
spring spring
owning you utterly
at home
in your hair
blowing full of being
free of sentences and capitals
popping out of all
gerunds into joy
O boy
seeing you
bounding toward the door
I hold out these nouns
and when you come
participling through
you capital I
watch out
jump up
O you boy
I verb you
with a little round smack
at the end of
your sentence.

Mary Jean Irion.

On the Stewardship of Property

THE EUPHEMISM is "delayed maintenance." The reality is dereliction. The result is decay. When I arrived on the site of my present ministry, the Brent House at the University of Chicago, I found a building that the Episcopal Church had owned for over 50 years, a fine and substantial house built for a properous physician at the turn of the century. It is ideally situated to serve the campus and neighborhood—a genuine "center" for church ministry. But the neglect it had suffered was obvious in its crumbling façade and its dark, dirty and often makeshift interior. When the building opens to welcome students this autumn, it will have been totally restored and renewed at considerable cost and labor. And if the past is any index of the future, the simple act of cleaning up will prove one of the most significant investments in the church's mission on campus.

We began a thorough cleaning in 1982, when my student associate and I rolled up our sleeves and worked our way down through an attic, three floors and a cellar. Throughout the following year, visitors commented on the noticeable change and how much more hospitable the place seemed. Hours of pruning and mowing and planting improved the outward appearance. Cleaned light fixtures and furniture made the interior warmer. Still, no amount of cleaning could alter the deterioration that ultimately caught up with us.

It is difficult to fault well-meant precedents. Nonetheless, as the adage reminds, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. As the coats produced by amateur painting parties began to peel, the layers of plastic "genuine imitation marble" tiles began to fall off, and volunteer wiring projects shorted out. I was reminded that hades, like heaven, can be very near at hand.

NURTURED IN THE spiritual cradle of the '60s I was wary of sinking precious treasure into temporal timbers. How could we justify the energy and expense of the massive undertaking this would obviously be? Like Judas, I wondered if it would be better to sell the precious ointment and give the proceeds to the poor. But the points were stacked in favor of capital improvement. The site is central and essential, as the nearest parish is not easily accessible to a pedestrian population. The property is spacious and sufficient to serve our needs, so far as square footage is concerned. The church's initial and subsequent investments in the property were modest (which was, of course, part of the problem), so we could invest a considerable sum before reaching anything near the property's current value. And there were the intangibles: the identification of the site with more than 50 years of respected ministry, and the historical significance of a building revered not only for its design and solid construction but also for its pro-

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NO. 1

ACT29

Happy New Year!

St. Luke's M. C. C.

JANUARY 1988

THE EPIPHANY JOURNEY

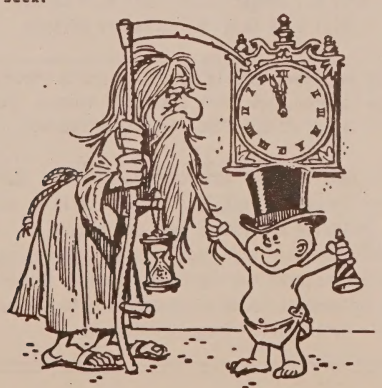
It may be that the visit of Magi (Wise Men) took place as much as two years after the birth of Jesus. The Church has traditionally celebrated the event on the twelfth day of Christmas. That day is called Epiphany and occurs on January 6. In this country Epiphany is all but ignored since we begin our celebration of Christmas just after Halloween, but in many places Epiphany is the real day of celebration.

The word means "to appear or be manifest." The significance of Epiphany is that it marks the manifestation of Christ to the Magi and other people who were generally regarded as "outside the faith," strangers, people like us.

We are not told how far the Magi journeyed or how long it took them to find the place where they worshipped the Christ Child. We at St. Luke's M.C.C. are on a similar Epiphany journey. We too have left our warm home of the past years and have set out on a strange journey. Like the Magi, we do not know exactly where it will lead us, or how long it might take. But, like the Magi, we have embarked in faith to find the place where we may worship the Christ who brings God's redeeming love to all people.

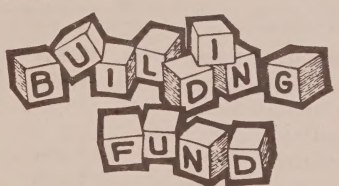
Along the way there were probably times when the Magi wondered just how wise they really were. We, too, might have those thoughts, but we must remember why we have taken the journey.

With the Magi, we hope our journey will not be too long, and like them, we will continue faithfully until we build the place where we may all gather and worship the Child. Come and join us in our journey of faith, and you might find the miracle you seek.



FELLOWSHIP BENEVOLENCE FUND

The General Council at our October meeting passed the following motion: "MOVED that a line item be added to the UFMCC Budget designated for Benevolences. Funds collected in this line item will be available to meet the needs of Pastoral Leaders, Fellowship personnel, and their families in cases of catastrophic illnesses or situations." The congregation and friends of Metropolitan Community Churches have been called upon by Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry to help raise funds for Rev. Elder Emeritus (Papa) John Hose who has been hospitalized again with his ongoing bout with extensive cancer. His bills now total over $4,000.00. Rev. Perry has called upon us "to raise not only the $4,000.00, but a vast offering of which 100% will be used in caring for our official Fellowship family as is stated in the General Council resolution."



NEW BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Building Committee met on December 8, 1987 with Tom Renolds, architect. After the comments at the last congregational meeting and considering the four written responses to our presentation at the congregational meeting, we reworked the floor plans of the existing buildings to make a larger kitchen in the fellowship hall (the larger of the existing buildings).

Tom Reynolds presented new renderings for the exterior of the new sanctury incorporating features more in keeping with Springfield architecture, e.g. fish scale shingles, dentiles, columns, a truncated octagonal roofed tower and arch topped windows. The floor plan of the new sanctuary was unchanged.

A colored rendering of the building complex as well as a model of the new sanctuary was approved and should be ready to present to the congregation early in the new year. A joint meeting with the Fund Raising Committee is scheduled for January 11, 1988.

From the PASTOR—

Time is moving so rapidly. Kalvin and I are glad to be here. The holiday season is past. January is a time to rest and reflect before Lent begins.

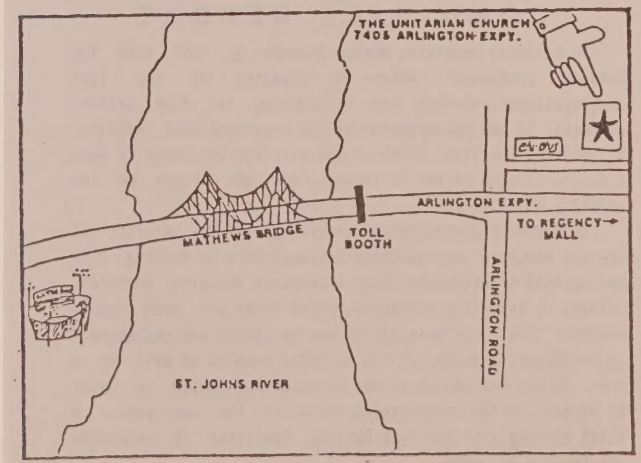
We look forward to fulfilling our ministries and the mandate of the Board and the congregation. St. Luke's has so many important ministries in Jacksonville. We pray that these will successfully continue to expand in the future.

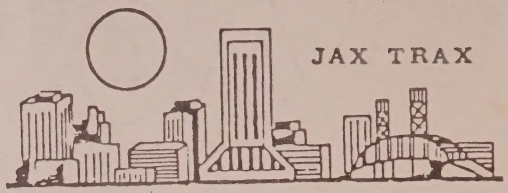
We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, kindness, and hospitality as we make Jacksonville our home.

Rev. Robert W. Twar

OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours:	Monday-Friday	10:00am- 6:00pm
Help-Line Hours:	Monday-Saturday	6:00pm-12:00am
Worship Services:	Sunday	7:00pm
Board Meetings:	See Calendar	
Choir Practice:	Sunday	5:00pm
Youth Group:	Sunday	5:30pm





**WOMYN'S POTLUCK Wed., Jan. 20, Call St. Luke's MCC for details at 384-6004.

**HIV POSITIVE SUPPORT Meets every Monday at 7:00 across from the Aid Jacksonville office, Koger Center, 1914 Beachway Road, Suite 5-D. Phone 396-2562 or the church office 384-6004.

**AID/JACKSONVILLE Every Tues., at the Koger Center, 1914 Beachway Road, Suite 5-D. Phone 399-4589.

**GAY/LESBIAN AA Every Tuesday, Immaculata Hall, 107 E. Church St. 8:00.

**YOUTH GROUP: Meets every Sunday, 5:30pm at Unitarian Church. Call church for details at 384-6004.

CHURCH STAFF

Robert W. Twar - Pastor
Kenneth D. Henderson, Jr. - Administrator
Iris B., Ken Henderson, & Claudia S. - Student Clergy
Terri C., Sam H., Corky M., Donna Z. - Deacons
Bill E. - Organist
James S. - Pianist

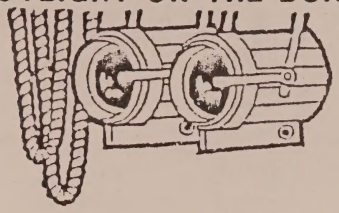
NEWSLETTER STAFF

Rick Baker - Editor
Kenneth Henderson - Computer/Typist
Judy C. - Distribution Manager
Rick B., Rodger H., & Terry W. - Layout
Bill E. & Carol H. - Feature Writers

ACT 29 is published monthly by St. Luke's Metropolitan Community Church, 1165 South Edgewood Avenue, Suite 5, Jacksonville, Florida 32205. Telephone 384-6004.

Materials submitted for publication should be mailed to the church in care of ACT 29. All materials submitted must be inclusive of gender, age, and race. The Editors will modify any language not meeting these criteria. ACT 29 also reserves the right to reject or edit any material determined to be inconsistent with the policy of St. Luke's Metropolitan Community Church.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOARD



DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

December 7, 1987
Dave Bonner, Clerk

Members present: Diane B., Dave B., Judy C., Ken C., Ron H., Barbara R., Lori S. Vice-moderator Diane B. called meeting to order. Ken Henderson opened with a word of prayer. Minutes of last meeting read and approved.

Valerie Bhatta, a reporter for the Florida Times Union, was present. We invited a spirit of understanding and cooperation in future articles on the gay community. Ken Henderson, Barbara R. will serve as contact people.

Old Business: 1. AIDS House: Several large donations have been received. 2. Lynn Lavner Concert: Report by Dave B. Expenses with cheaper air fare - $240.00; Printing of tickets and posters - $625.00; ads sold - $720.00; if 600 tickets sold = $8400 ($6885 after expenses) sell posters - $200. Letters sent to M.C.C. Orlando, Gainesville, Lakeland, and Daytona Beach. We must sell 117 tickets to break even. Images donating sound equipment. Only Jo's and Junction have not purchased ads. 3. Candidate schedule discussed. 4. Choir Director Resignation: We will do with our own talent. 5. Resignation of Ronni S.: Ron H. made a motion that we table this resignation until the new pastor is here. Motion seconded and approved. 6. Community Fund Financial Sheet delivered to Business Guild. 7. Stewardship Program: Two letters will be sent to the congregation with the theme of "one caring person makes a difference." 8. Ron H. will discuss sign for Springfield property with the architect.

New Business: 1. Dave B. announced his resignation effective February 1, 1988. Meeting adjourned.

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GEORGE H. MASTERS, D.D.S.
GENERAL DENTISTRY

2144 CASSAT AVENUE JACKSONVILLE, FLA.
384-5472

Gaystory

BEFORE GREEKS ,

THERE WERE AMAZONS

Before there were Greeks, there were Amazons. Although once considered myths, the amazons were historical figures, as proven by recent research. There were, in fact, several types of amazons. The more familiar ones originated in Thrace where a primeval, matriarchal civilization flourished. From Thrace the amazons moved to the banks of the Thermodon River in Asia Minor where they formed three tribes. There were also amazon states in Libya and elsewhere in North Africa. The period of amazon greatness ranged from 1600 to 1100 B.C. It should be noted that many cultures, such as the Celtic, Minoan, and Canaanite, were matriarchal.

Amazons were noted for the complete absence of men from their ranks. These ancient separatists consented to cohabit with men once a year in order to reproduce, but promptly sent all male children to their fathers, keeping their daughters. Excepting this bow to heterosexuality, their sexual and emotional needs were fulfilled through lesbian relationships. Sometimes they tolerated their male neighbors. Sometimes they killed all males whom they happened to find.

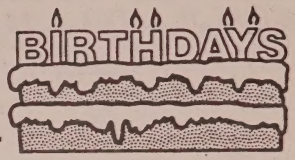
Amazons were ruled by queens, in some cases by two queens--one for civic and one for military matters. They subsisted through agriculture and raising animals. They worshipped the Mother Goddess Demeter and her daughter Artemis (Diana). It is alleged that they founded the original Temple to Diana at Ephesus which was later one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

It is in their role of warriors that amazons are best known. They were the inventors of the art of cavalry. They were also adept at archery. Greek historians (male, of course) said that these women burned off their right breasts in order to shoot arrows more easily. The word "amazon" is from the Greek a-mazo or "no breast." There is no proof of such mutilation.

Indeed, the Greeks had no love for the amazons. Perhaps it was because the amazons under Queen Penthesilea helped Troy in the Trojan War. It is more likely that the matriarchal culture of the amazons clashed with the Greek patriarchal tradition. Greek literature and mythology tell of an epic battle between Greeks and amazons with the Greeks being victorious. The Greek hero Herakles (Hercules) killed the amazon Queen Hippolyte. Herodotus tells us that the amazons did not die, but escaped to the Don in the Ukraine.

Legends of matriarchal societies continued. In 1541 when Francisco de Orellana discovered female warriors by the banks of a great river in Brazil, he named the river--Amazon. The "amazon legacy" has influenced the Wonder Woman comic books, the literature of Monique Wittig, Susy McKee Charnas, and Sally Gearhart, the music of Alix Dobkin, Holly Near, and Cris Williamson, and women's groups the world over.

--Paraphrased from an article by Jesse Monteagudo in the Weekly News, October 15, 1980.



1 Rocky M.	1 Lane S.
1 Cathy Z.	2 Gary M.
3 Mike G.	7 Fred H.
9 Lori S.	12 Ginger C.
15 Darrell M.	17 Merritt T.
21 Veronica A.	24 Christine Y.
25 Cindy O.	

Please note: If you have a birthday in January and it is not listed above then the church office does not have a record of it. Please let us know so that we may update our records.

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Light Housekeeping Weekly and biweekly. Call Robbie at 354-0562 (or leave a message).

Home for Sale: For sale by owner 3 bedrooms; 2 baths; 2 car garage; double lot; new roof; formerly used as parsonage. For more information call: Bill (353-1410).

For Sale Ballooney Tunes: Owner transferred (by God) to Dallas, Texas. Fun business. Lots of potential for growth & expansion. For more information call: Bill (353-1410).

For Rent: 1BR 1BA in Riverside near Willowbranch Park $250.00 month $150.00 deposit. Quality people, nice neighborhood (904) 388-2538 ask for Buddy.

For Rent: Large 2 BR/1BA Riverside Apartment. $375.00 per month plus deposit. 387-1986 before 5:00 p.m.

ARE YOU ON DUTY

THIS MONTH ?

Jan. 3	Deacon	- Terri C.
	Server	- Corky M.
	Liturgist	- Claudia S.
	Board	- Judy C. & Ken C.
	Refreshments	- Lori S., Donna Z., Iris B., & Karole B.
Jan. 10	Deacon	- Donna Z.
	Server	- Sam. H.
	Liturgist	- Ken H.
	Board	- Ron H. & Lori S.
	Refreshments	- Rik A., Bruce R., & Sam H.
Jan. 17	Deacon	- Corky M.
	Server	- Terri C.
	Liturgist	- Iris B.
	Board	- Gary H. & Barbara R.
	Refreshments	- Stephen J. & Thomas P.
Jan. 24	Deacon	- Sam H.
	Server	- Donna Z.
	Liturgist	- Claudia S.
	Board	- Dave B. & Diane B.
	Refreshments	- Claudia S., Ronni S., & Michelle S.
Jan. 31	Deacon	- Terri C.
	Server	- Corky M.
	Liturgist	- Ken H.
	Board	- Judy C. & Ron H.
	Refreshments	- Mike G., Mark A., & Alice H.

STYLES BY JUDY & SHIRLEY
MON. THRU FRI. 9-5:30
SAT. 9-3:00

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Attendance

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE			WEEKLY OFFERING
Sun. 11/15	-	85	$ 1651.00
Sun. 11/22	-	107	$ 1189.00
Sun. 11/29	-	105	$ 1095.00
Fri. 12/04	-	34	$ 107.00
Sat. 12/05	-	36	$ 97.00
Sun. 12/06	-	104	$ 1512.00
Sun. 12/13	-	137	$ 1531.00

TOP TWENTY TITHES

OCTOBER 1987

1.	MCC San Diego	San Diego CA	$1607.42
2.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC	Ft.Lauderdale, FL	1500.24
3.	MCC Dallas	Dallas, TX	1456.70
4.	MCC of the Resurrection	Houston, TX	1158.83
5.	MCC Washington DC	Washington, DC	1129.74
6.	MCC Long Beach	Long Beach, CA	1028.91
7.	MCC in the Valley	N. Hollywoodn, CA	1008.35
8.	King of Peace MCC	St. Petersburg, FL	840.47
9.	MCC Seattle	Seattle, WA	645.22
10.	MCC of the Disciples	Washington, DC	606.83
11.	MCC Portland	Portland, OR	605.21
12.	Christ Chapel MCC	Santa Ana, CA	562.32
13.	St. Luke's MCC	Jacksonville, FL	558.89
14.	MCC Detroit	Detroit, MI	496.96
15.	Divine Redeemer MCC	Glendale, CA	470.78
16.	Spirit of Love MCC	Wichita, KS	459.05
17.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC	Des Moines, IA	422.36
18.	Casa de Cristo Evangelical MCC	Phoenix AZ	383.96
19.	Joy MCC	Orlando, FL	370.64
20.	Holy Covenant MCC	Hinsdale, IL	353.10

-reprinted from "Keeping In Touch", December 1987

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TUESDAY...
◇ NO COVER
◇ $4.99 Dinner Special
◇ $1.00 Well Drinks, $1.00 Longnecks and $1.00 Draft — 8 p.m. - Closing

WEDNESDAY...
RETURN TO THE GOOD OLD DAYS!
◇ $3.00 COVER
◇ $4.99 Dinner Special
◇ .10¢ Well Drinks and .10¢ Draft — 8 p.m. - Closing
◇ Hors d'oeuvres

THURSDAY...
◇ NO COVER
◇ $4.99 Dinner Special
◇ $1.00 Well Drinks, $1.00 Longnecks and $1.00 Draft — 8 p.m. - Closing

FRIDAY & SATURDAY...
◇ $2.00 COVER
◇ $4.99 Dinner Special
◇ .50¢ Well Drinks and .50¢ Draft — 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.
◇ $1.50 Well Drinks, $1.50 Longnecks and $1.00 Draft — 10 p.m. - Closing
◇ Hors d'oeuvres

SUNDAY...
◇ $5.00 SUPER BUFFET — 5 p.m.- 9 p.m.
◇ .50¢ Well Drinks, and Draft Beer — 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
◇ $3.00 BUFFET — 9 p.m.- Closing
◇ $1.50 Well Drinks, $1.50 Longnecks and $1.00 Draft — 9 p.m. - Closing
◇ Hors d'oeuvres

JUST WATCH US!

JANUARY CALENDAR of events

:3 CHRISTMAS	:4	:5	:6	:7	:8	:9	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:Choir 5:00	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:Youth Group 5:30	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:Worship 7:00	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:10 EPIPHANY 1	:11	:12	:13	:14	:15	:16	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:Choir 5:00	:	:Board Meeting	:Staff meeting	:	:	:	:
:Youth Group 5:30	:	:7:00	:7:00	:	:	:	:
:Worship 7:00	:	:church office	:Church office	:	:	:	:
:17 EPIPHANY 2	:18	:19	:20	:21	:22	:23	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:Choir 5:00	:	:	:	:Council of Min.	:	:	:
:Youth Group 5:30	:	:	:	:7:00	:	:	:
:Worship 7:00	:	:	:	:Stephen J.'s	:	:	:
:24 EPIPHANY 3	:25	:26	:27	:28	:29	:30	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:Choir 5:00	:	:Board Meeting	:	:	:	:	:
:Youth Group 5:30	:	:7:00	:	:	:	:	:
:Worship 7:00	:	:Church office	:	:	:	:	:
:31 EPIPHANY 4	:						
:	:						
:	:						
:Choir 5:00	:						
:Youth Group 5:30	:						
:Worship 7:00	:						

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BUDGET

ST. LUKE'S METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT NOVEMBER 1987

ITEM	NOVEMBER	TO DATE	BUDGETED	REMAINDER
UFMCC Tithes (10%)	$ 558.89	$7,667.85	$7,701.80	$ 33.95
District Tithes (5%)	279.44	3,846.20	3,850.90	4.70
Pastor's Salary	1,343.06	13,746.84	13,750.00	3.16
Michael Piazza vacation	576.92			
John Rutland-Wallis	150.00			
Martha Rutland-Wallis	50.00			
Nevin Wertenberger	100.00			
Candidate plane tickets	466.14			
Pastor's Housing Allow.	153.84	3,384.48	3,666.70	282.22
Pastor's Auto Lease	217.47	2,392.17	2,475.00	82.83
Pastor's Auto Expense	115.38	2,672.97	2,750.00	77.03
Pastor's Book/Ed.	-0-	1,214.45	1,191.70	(22.75)
Pastor's Insurance	114.00	886.48	1,283.30	396.82
Admin. Associate	1,584.61	11,738.49	14,666.60	2,928.11
Admin. Assoc. Taxes	113.30	839.30	1,258.40	419.10
Organist	250.00	2,300.00	2,383.30	83.30
Pianist	175.00	1,255.00	1,668.30	413.30
Choir Director	153.84	568.44	1,833.30	1,264.86
Conference Expenses	-0-	1,802.86	1,833.30	30.44
Honorariums	-0-	200.00	275.00	75.00
Pension Fund	-0-	752.50	660.00	(92.50)
Staff Vestments	-0-	138.25	366.60	228.35
Staff Ed. Supplies	-0-	-0-	550.00	550.00
Mortgage/Rent	753.00	12,691.94	16,500.00	3,808.06
Insurance	-0-	962.00	779.20	(182.80)
Electricity	63.74	624.84	2,200.00	1,575.16
Gas	-0-	-0-	229.20	229.20
Maint. & Repair	321.08	435.98	1,833.30	1,397.32
Water	-0-	4.89	229.20	224.31
Postage	22.00	491.04	595.80	104.76
Stat. & Supplies	58.24	799.00	1,100.00	301.00
Telephone	145.71	1,770.06	1,375.00	(395.06)
Copier Payment	116.91	1,286.01	1,283.30	(2.71)
Copier Maint. Cont.	79.50	1,075.46	825.00	(250.46)
Typwriter Maint. Cont.	73.50	73.50	68.75	(4.75)
Computer Software	-0-	303.36	275.00	(28.36)
Flowers	-0-	20.00	137.50	117.50
Miscellaneous	-0-	320.36	550.00	229.64
Music	20.85	270.18	1,100.00	829.82
Program Supplies	38.75	360.98	458.30	97.32
Worship Supplies	68.62	883.79	550.00	(333.79)
Social Comm. Supplies	79.60	279.60	458.30	178.70
	6,558.40	78,059.27	92,712.05	14,652.78

OTHER EXPENSES	NOVEMBER	TO DATE
Act 29	293.17	2,470.12
Inherited Property	100.00	1,000.00
Altar Table	-0-	150.00
Entrtn '87	-0-	660.00
Retainer For Lawyer	-0-	300.00
FICA/P.R. Tax	-0-	728.22
Spaghetti Supper	-0-	50.00
Retreat	-0-	657.34
Art Auction	-0-	619.15
World Extension	-0-	1,155.00
Prideweek-Coca Cola Par 4	-0-	89.50
Concert 12-31-87	274.50	414.70
Find Your Way Home - Play	-0-	85.00
Feed the hungry	224.83	224.83
TOTAL	892.50	8,603.86

INCOME		
Tithes & Offerings	6,090.50	74,307.94
Interest Income	14.97	214.62
Cookbooks	-0-	75.00
Tax Collector/Dep Refund	-0-	235.55
Act 29	2.00	1,103.20
Copy Machine	-0-	52.00
Poinsettias	-0-	10.00
Entertainment '87	-0-	260.00
Help-Line Telephone	-0-	563.42
Retreat	-0-	701.50
Building Fund	-0-	25.00
Lenton Folders	-0-	1,155.00
Art Auction Door	-0-	363.00
Conference Refund	-0-	133.46
Christmas cards	110.00	110.00
TOTAL	6,217.47	79,309.69

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(from surviving and thriving with HIV/AIDS, available from the Gay Men's AIDS Coalition, 263 A West 19th St. Room 125, New York, NY, 10011, $5)

STEVEN JAMES' TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE, NON-SCIENTIFIC GUIDE TO ILLNESS AND HEALTH: TEN STEP PROGRAMS

by Steven James

I. HOW TO GET SICK

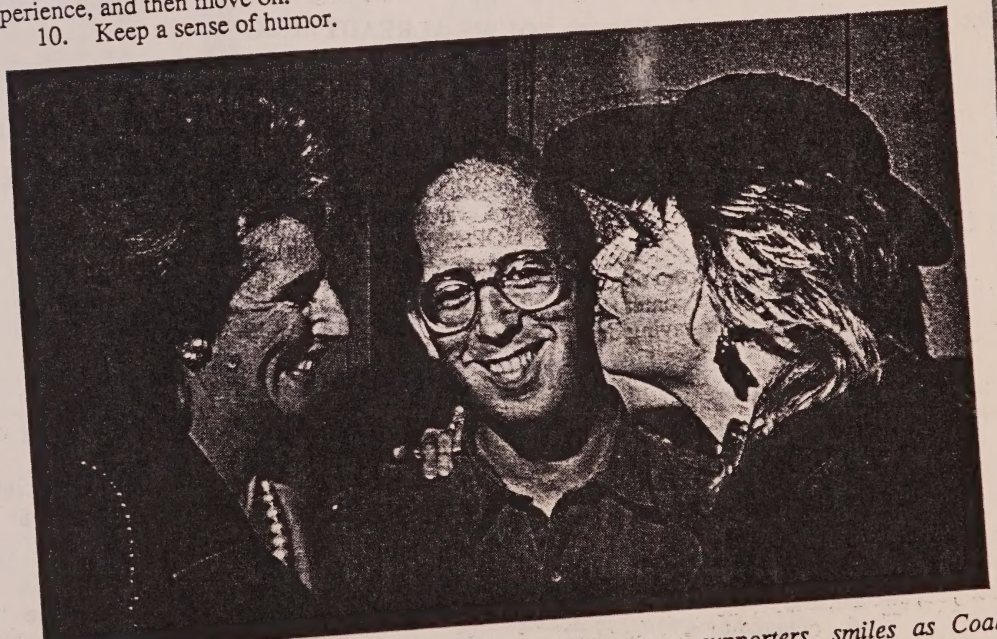
1. Don't pay attention to your body. Eat plenty of junk food, drink too much, take drugs, have lots of unsafe sex with lots of different partners--and, above all, feel guilty about it. If you are over-stressed and tired, ignore it and keep pushing yourself.
2. Cultivate the experience of your life as meaningless and of little value.
3. Do the things you don't like, and avoid doing what you really want. Follow everyone else's opinion and advice, while seeing yourself as miserable and "stuck."
4. Be resentful and hyper-critical, especially towards yourself.
5. Fill your mind with dreadful pictures, and then obsess over them. Worry most, if not all, of the time.
6. Avoid deep, lasting, intimate relationships.
7. Blame other people for all your problems.
8. Do not express your feelings and views openly and honestly. Other people wouldn't appreciate it. If at all possible, do not even know what your feelings are.
9. Shun anything that resembles a sense of humor. Life is no laughing matter!
10. Avoid making any changes which would bring you greater satisfaction and joy.

II. HOW TO GET SICKER (IF YOU'RE ALREADY SICK)

1. Think about all the awful things that could happen to you. Dwell upon negative, fearful images.
2. Be depressed, self-pitying, envious, and angry. Blame everyone and everything for your illness.
3. Read articles, books, and newspapers, watch TV programs, and listen to people who reinforce the viewpoint that there is NO HOPE. You are powerless to influence your fate.
4. Cut yourself off from other people. Regard yourself as a pariah. Lock yourself up in your room and contemplate death.
5. Hate yourself for having destroyed your life. Blame yourself mercilessly and incessantly.
6. Go to see lots of different doctors. Run from one to another, spend half your time in waiting rooms, get lots of conflicting opinions and lots of experimental drugs, starting one program after another without sticking to any.
7. Quit your job, stop work on any projects, give up all activities that bring you a sense of purpose and fun. See your life as essentially pointless, and at an end.
8. Complain about your symptoms, and if you associate with anyone, do so exclusively with other people who are unhappy and embittered. Reinforce each other's feelings of hopelessness.
9. Don't take care of yourself. What's the use? Try to get other people to do it for you, and then resent them for not doing a good job.
10. Think how awful life is, and how you might as well be dead. But make sure you are absolutely terrified of death, just to increase the pain.

III. HOW TO STAY WELL (OR GET BETTER, IF YOU'RE NOT SO WELL TO BEGIN WITH)

1. Do things that bring you a sense of fulfillment, joy, and purpose, that validate your worth. See your life as your own creation, and strive to make it a positive one.
2. Pay close and loving attention to yourself, tuning in to your needs on all levels. Take care of yourself, nourishing, supporting, and encouraging yourself.
3. Release all negative emotions--resentment, envy, fear, sadness, anger. Express your feelings appropriately; don't hold onto them. Forgive yourself.
4. Hold positive images and goals in your mind, pictures of what you truly want in your life. When fearful images arise, re-focus on images that evoke feelings of peace and joy.
5. Love yourself, and love everyone else. Make loving the purpose and primary expression in your life.
6. Create fun, loving, honest relationships, allowing for the expression and fulfillment of needs for intimacy and security. Try to heal any wounds in past relationships, as with old lovers, and mother and father.
7. Make a positive contribution to your community, through some form of work or service that you value and enjoy.
8. Make a commitment to health and well-being, and develop a belief in the possibility of total health. Develop your own healing program, drawing on the support and advice of experts without becoming enslaved to them.
9. Accept yourself and everything in your life as an opportunity for growth and learning. Be grateful. When you fuck up, forgive yourself, learn what you can from the experience, and then move on.
10. Keep a sense of humor.



JUDY PEABODY, *one of the PWA Coalition's biggest supporters, smiles as Coaliti* *Executive Director* **MICHAEL HIRSCH** *receives an affectionate peck from curre* *Coalition President* **GRIFFIN GOLD** *at David Summer's birthday party.*

Priscilla Vaughan
Rt. 2, Box 99
Semmes, AL 36575

A STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

Twenty-three prescription capsules lie on the living room couch. Eleven pair with one left over--one single capsule which bitterly reminds me of my own aloneness, As a nurse, I know their consumption will, at best, buy me only a few hours of escape. The likelihood of being found and refused my deathwish is too great. Yet, even a few hours of relief seem tempting.

Six weeks ago, my lover of three years left me. Since then, simply maintaining a will to exist has been a struggle. I have grieved and mourned to a place of numbness and void. My senses have been overloaded with memories and emotions. I have wanted to die. Surely the sun could not rise on such grief--but it did, and it will again and now I must accept or reject the destiny of survival.

According to psychotherapist, Dr. Zev Wanderer, although couples start relationships thinking they will be together for a lifetime, "realistically they have about a sixty-forty chance nationwide, and a fifty-fifty chance in California." Dr. Wanderer further states that "suicide prevention centers across the United States report that almost eighty percent of the cases they come in contact with can be attributed to terminated relationships."

I am not alone in this experience, yet the experience of hundreds does not ease my aloneness. Left on the loosing side of percentages, how do I avoid becoming a statistic? Left without control, where can I find the strength to survive?

Within all of us is a core of strength, I am told. Time will heal all pain, I am told. Where is that strength--how many layers of myself will be destroyed before that core will be reached? Where can time be bought?

After an hour of sitting and staring at twenty-three capsules, I carefully repackage them in their appropriate containers. Faced with the choice of life or attempted death, I choose to survive. With my choice, I discover my core of strength and I buy time.

Do you really want the repetition

A good paper. I think you could make it more dramatic by adding some particulars -- some incidents, memories . . . This would make your paper more marketable.

A-

But the point of all this is that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, just like me, who are out there in that vague, shadowy, sometimes confusing expanse of land we call Mobile --- people who are in need of what MCC * Mobile has to offer --- people who need the support of others --- people who deep down inside know that they want to "belong" to something --- and even people who are just downright curious. On some of my very infrequent ventures into downtown, I occasionally hear from people who express at least a passing interest in what goes on at MCC * Mobile. But very often, these people never do quite make it when Sunday night rolls around. What happened?

Won't you join us... give us a try... see what we are all about. Who knows, you may be very pleasantly surprised!

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FROM THE EDITOR'S PEN . . . . .

Somewhere in this issue of the MCC * Mobile Newsletter, you will find attendance figures for our weekly services during the summer of 1987. These are impressive figures: the church began in March 1985 with six people in attendance and in the past thirty months has experienced phenomenal growth. Many people (in all denominations) emphatically state that people tend not to attend church in the summer... everyone is too busy at the beach, in the bars, on trips, taking time off. Such seems not to be the case at MCC * Mobile! I bring this to your attention not to "show off" but to point out that MCC * Mobile is fulfilling a very definite need in our area. I have been involved with MCC * Mobile for one full year now, and it really means something to me to see a constant stream of new faces, week after week after week. And, with the reception of new members in February 1987 and again in August, our membership has doubled.

If you have received this newsletter in a bar, or have received it through the mail but have not attended MCC * Mobile lately, I want to encourage you to join us! Like the ad elsewhere in this issue says, "Don't Be Shy!" We have in our midst people of all ages and from all walks of life. We have homemakers... we have businessmen... we have teachers... we have professors... we have carpenters... we have students... we have musicians ... we have retailers... we have the unemployed, too, and we try to help them. We have men, women, boys, girls, people who drive 30, 50, even 100 miles every Sunday night to be with us. We have a unique program called the AIDS Buddy Program... volunteers within the church community give of their time and energy to assist AIDS patients in need. We have a weekly bible study, covering a wide range of topics. We have a weekly discussion group called "Rap," which provides everyone in the community an opportunity to meet in a non-threatening environment to do just that --- rap. We have our own facility for worship service and other church events. We have our own facility with which we assist AIDS patients and others in need. So, you might say that we have it all. WRONG! We don't have YOU. If you have always been curious about what an MCC is, or if your own church will not in principle accept you for what you are, or if you just haven't "felt religious" in a few weeks, months or even years, then give MCC * Mobile a try. MCC is people caring about people --- we do not condemn, we do not condone, we DO try to understand.

Obviously this piece is being directed at those who do not normally or regularly join us in our church activities. Some in the non-gay community would readily jump on this as "recruiting." Some would say that I am trying to make our attendance figures look more impressive. Some would probably say that I am just filling up empty space in the newsletter. No, none of these are true. One year ago, I had reached a very low point in my life, spiritually speaking. My own church had long ago told me, in so many words, that Iwwas unfit to belong, did not adhere to beliefs, was in effect not a whole person simply because I happen to be Gay. Upon moving to Mobile, I learned of the MCC and eventually met its pastor, Rev. Marge Ragona. I had of course heard of MCC but had never lived in a city which had one. I began to attend services, became a member in February, and shortly thereafter I was approached to handle the monthly newsletter. Through MCC * Mobile I have met many, many, many people --- people I most likely would never have met in the bars, on the street, or anywhere else. My life has been thoroughly enriched by knowing and dealing with many of these people.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH AT MOBILE
1600 Center Street, Mobile, Alabama 36604

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor

(205) 476-9142

NEWSLETTER

Valentines Day

Love and Valentine's Day reminds me that same-sex love has been around for a long time. Walt Whitman wrote some beautiful poetry describing his feelings for another man. A favorite is this:

WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY

When I heard at the close of the day how my name had been received with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy night for me that follow'd,
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still I was not happy,
But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath of autumn,
When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear in the morning light,
When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise,
And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was on his way coming, O then I was happy,
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well,
And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening came my friend,
And that night while all was still I heard the waters roll slowly continually up the shores,
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to me whispering to congratulate me,
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the cool night,
In the stillness of the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward me,
And his arm lay lightly around my breast -- and that night I was happy.

FROM THE EDITOR--

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This is the official organ of the Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile, Alabama, 1600 Center Street, Mobile AL 36606. The newsletter is published monthly to inform church members and the community-at-large about events of MCC * Mobile. We welcome your contributions! All we require is that a name and address be submitted along with the newscopy for publication. We will not print anyone's name or address, however, without explicit written consent. Please contribute your news, views, recent happenings, recipes, book and movie reviews, or place a free classified ad with us (no personals, please.) Send your submissions by the 20th of each month to: 1600 Center Street, Mobile, AL 36604

A COVENANT OF LOVE

Here it is February and Valentine's Day is just around the corner. Love is in the air and lovers are thinking about spring and relationships, and being in love is once more fashionable. So -- by the way -- is commitment. MCC honors commitment, and believes that people grow by making and keeping commitments. Someone onse said that anyone can love 20 people in a year, the trick is to love one person for 20 years! If you have a committed relationship that has lasted over time, maybe you'd like to think about celebrating that relationship with a commitment or covenant ceremony. MCC performs a rite called a "Holy Union" which does just that -- celebrates commitment. We require first that the two people acknowledge that the relationship is intended to be a long-term commitment (and we even think of these as "life partnerships") and that they will be sharing their lives in a very personal covenant, which transcends any other relationship. Secondly, we ask that the relationship be in existence for at least a year, or that they have spent six months living together, and know that the relationship can withstand the everyday tensions of life under one roof. Third, we ask that you be willing to undergo some probing into how your relationship works, so that the person who performs the ceremony can do so with a sense of integrity, knowing that the relationship is indeed a solid one.

If this interests you, please call Rev. Marge at 476-9142 and talk about what a Holy Union might mean in your life and how it might make your relationship better for both of you. Celebrating life and love is a wonderful way to announce to your friends (and maybe even your family) that your love is here to stay.

FOR ALL TIME, LOVE

If I have all human or angelic eloquence, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness enough to move mountains, but am without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to be burned, but am without love, it will do me no good whatsoever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish. Love does not take offense, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth. It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or if one has the gift of tongues, it will not continue forever. If one has all knowledge, this too must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, thought like a child, argued like a child; but now I am grown, and all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now the knowledge that I have is imperfect, but then I shall know as fully as I am known.

In short, there are three things that abide: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

I Corinthians 13

And in the Bible, one woman said to another:

Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to keep from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so and more beside, if ought save death part me and thee.

Ruth 1:14-17

A Gay Witness to Pope John Paul II

TO ITS SURPRISE, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches received an invitation to participate in the ecumenical prayer service led by Pope John Paul II at Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia, South Carolina, during his recent visit to the U.S. The invitation, issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, offered us the chance to participate in the clergy procession as well as the subsequent "Day of Dialogue" with Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity; Bishop James Crumley of the Lutheran Church in America; and other ecumenical leaders.

The surprise was due to the fact that our denomination has a special ministry to gays and lesbians. We are well aware of the Vatican's negative stance on homosexuality, and that Dignity International (the organization for gay and lesbian Catholics) was not invited to any papal events. It seemed strange to us that our first contact ever with the bishops would be this invitation. Indeed, the invitation may have been a mistake—though one organizer of the prayer service at Columbia told us it was not. In any case, our presence was never mentioned publicly, or acknowledged in any of the literature concerning the event. Perhaps MCC fell into the category of "the other groups" cited in the program.

Many of our gay sisters and brothers, so hurt and angered by the Roman Catholic Church, would probably not understand why we accepted the invitation. But we felt it was important to make a witness.

The "Day of Dialogue" offered us litte chance for dialogue, however. Presentations by Willebrands and Crumley left time for only three questions from the audience. (Since many of the invited guests represented denominations that had been engaged in bilateral discussions with the Roman Catholic Church, it occurred to us that we were included in the group because of MCC's formal discussion with the National Council of Churches.) I did get the chance to introduce myself informally to Cardinal Willebrands, though it was unclear whether he grasped the nature of our denomination. There was no time to continue the conversation.

Before the prayer service we were ushered into a waiting room for about four hours with other Catholics and Protestants, national leaders and local pastors. During that time we renewed old acquaintances and made new friends—and experienced the full range of responses to our lapel buttons that stated "God is Greater than AIDS."

Troy D. Perry, the founder of the MCC, and I carried with us in that clergy procession the hopes and fears, rage and pain of millions of gay and lesbian Catholics—those who are now members of MCC; those who are not in any church; and those who are trying to remain faithful Roman Catholics. We also represented those who are living and dying with AIDS, knowing that it is largely homophobic hysteria that has tragically impeded adequate research, treatment, education, justice and compassion. And we carried with us the blessed assurance that perseverance, time and the Holy Spirit are on our side. As people come to know us, homophobic fear is healed.

There were some special ironies in the service of the word at Columbia. The first reading, delivered by Helen Hayes, was from Ruth 1:14-17. For us in MCC, and for gays and lesbians everywhere, that Scripture is a poignant story of the deep commitment of one woman to another. We have always smiled inwardly when the church uses it so glibly and uncritically for heterosexual marriage ceremonies, without ever acknowledging the context. We are reclaiming it as a Scripture for ourselves, and we use it especially in commitment ceremonies for lesbians.

The second Scripture passage had equal impact on us. John Paul himself read from Matthew 12:46-50, which

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

concerns itself with Jesus' relation to his biological family. His mother and brothers come to see him, obviously concerned about the direction of his ministry. Jesus redefines his family, saying that it is comprised of those who "do the will of my Heavenly Parent." The Holy Father used this passage to talk about the need to "defend" the traditional, biological family. He spoke eloquently but predictably. However, the Scriptures themselves critiqued his message: clearly Jesus was in conflict with his family of origin, a conflict that was not resolved until he was hanging on a cross. I felt my spirit wearied and insulted by the implication that, as a lesbian, I am antifamily, or that I don't have or am not part of a family. Never mind that I am a daughter, a sister, an aunt and a niece; a spouse in a committed relationship for ten years; a godmother; and a pastor to a local congregation (and to a worldwide MCC family). My family does not fit neatly into Pope John Paul's narrow definition.

Who are your brothers and sisters, John Paul? According to Jesus, our brothers and sisters are all who do God's will, a point the pope seems to know except when it comes to my people. John Paul, you have many lesbian sisters and gay brothers who are striving to follow Jesus to live lives of justice, mercy and love. That was what Jesus said to us—and that we should not be surprised when our families include the unlikely ones, the poor, the socially outcast and those labeled "sinners."

GAY PEOPLE know the stresses of modern family life though we are no more the cause of them or the product of them than are any other Christians. Our children experience all the pressures of modern American adolescence. Our relationships suffer the same pressures as heterosexual marriages, and we need the same church support.

As the pope blessed perhaps 100 or so children that day, I prayed especially for the 10 per cent of them who will grow up to be gay or lesbian. How will they look back on that amazing historic day? I want them to know that *we were there* too, blessing them in our hearts, praying for them, and for the heterosexual children as well, that they might grow up in a world that is safer, kinder; where, in Peter Maurin's words, "it is easier for people to be good." Will they be able to count on you, Holy Father, or on your successor, when they grow up? Will their only choice be either to hide in closets of fear or to leave the Catholic Church?

For us, John Paul's message that day mostly missed the mark—except when he spoke so movingly about the cross of Christ. At times, his message was a cross for us to bear; but we, too, believe in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. And we know that in time even the Roman Catholic Church will repent of the sins it visits on our people, and that the church will embrace its gay and lesbian sons and daughters.

October 7, 1987 Nancy L. Wilson.

The Christian CENTURY

DON'T BE SHY! JOIN US...

MCC † MOBILE

1600 Center Street

Sundays at 7:00 P.M.

ANNIVERSARY

MCC AT MOBILE TO CELEBRATE THIRD ANNIVERSARY

MCC at Mobile isn't the new kid on the block any more. We have been in Mobile for three years now and have grown to 43 members in that time.

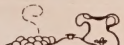
On Saturday, March 12th, MCC at Mobile will celebrate with our annual Anniverary Banquet and Awards ceremony. The location for the dinner is not yet set, call 476-9142 for that location.

Following the dinner, awards will be presented to the Member of the Year, to the person who has performed oustanding service for others (the Deacon's Award), and certificates of appreciation will be presented to church members who have contributed time and effort to the growth of the church.

Additionally, community members will be honored with certificates for community service. Among the honorees is Jim Ferels of the National AIDS Network for his efforts in obtaining an AIDS education grant for Mobile, and a one thousand dollar grant for the Buddy Program.

The dinner is open to anyone who wishes to attend, the charge being $10.00

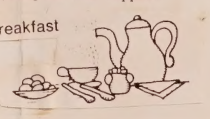
The speaker for the evening will be Rev. Jimmy Brock, pastor of Joy Metropolitan Community Church in Orlando, Florida. Rev. Brock used to be a Southern Baptist pastor in Mobile and Pensacola and is now with MCC. He is a very entertaining and dynamic speaker. You will enjoy him.



Potluck dinner

The first Friday of every month, MCC gets together for a potluck supper and a movie. The movie this month will be "Women in Love," and the supper is served at 7:00 p.m. You will enjoy the fun and the fellowship. A $3.00 charge is made, proceeds going to the support of the church.

Breakfast



On Joe Cain Day, Sunday, February 14th, MCC will open the building at 10:30 for people to join us for a substantial breakfast before the Joe Cain Day festivities. Charge for the breakfast is $2.00. Come and enjoy and have fun with us before you go out for the day.

...from the pastor

In getting this newsletter together, some interesting thoughts began to go through my head -- I was thinking of Valentine's Day and Mardi Gras and remembering sweet and funny things that had happened to me over the years at both of these verge of Spring holidays. Then I got to thinking about how many people had never experienced Mardi Gras, and I began remembering the many, many times I had stood on street corners with my hands in the air, yelling "Hey, mister, throw me something!" which is the cry in New Orleans, and last year beginning to understand why signs all over Mobile suddenly say "Moon Pie," and the excitement as Missy (my daughter) and I caught Moon Pies and laughed and tucked them in our pockets and counted them later on the dining room table and were filled with a sense of joy and goodness and benificence.

Mardi Gras is humanity being silly and feeling extravagant throwing candy and Moon Pies (in Mobile) or toys and necklaces (in New Orleans) and having a wonderful sense that foolishness and generosity are good for people from time to time.

We in the Christian world live in a cycle that recreates each year the wonder of the life of Christ -- Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost -- each season calling us to special meditations on the Christian life. Advent is a time of preparation and expectation of the coming of the Christ child, Christmas celebrates his birth, Epiphany (which means "God with us") announces the presence of God in our world in the form of the Christ. Lent prepares us for his death, burial and resurrection at Easter. Mardi Gras was once an important part of that cycle. "Fat Tuesday" was in medieval times the day on which one used up greases and fats which had been collected (usually in England in the form of pancake breakfasts) so that no meats or meat fats would be in the house during Lent. It was also usually the last time that candies and sweets would be eaten from Lent to Easter, and, of course, this is why sweets are thrown in the parades (and why Easter candy was so important). "Shrove Tuesday" derives from the word to shrive, to confess and be given absolution -- and it was on this day that penitents went to confession and prepared themselves to enter Lent with pure hearts. All of these ideas point to a much simpler time, when people's faith was a part of their daily living pattern, carried out in what they ate as well as in what they believed.

I'm sometimes surprised when Fundamentalist Christians talk about the "pagan" holiday of Mardi Gras and want to do away with it (but, of course, they would do away with Lent as well). Somehow, I think they have got it backwards. I'd like to see Lent be so special and maybe so solemn a time that people would indeed understand that being God's fools was part of the prelude to the solemnity. The contrast was what was important, and Carnival season (from 12th Night or Little Christmas, or King's Day, however January 7th was known around the Christian world to Mardi Gras) was a time of jollity between the solemnity and quiet joy of Christmas to the even deeper solemnity of Lent.

We, in the Gay community, with our understanding of masks and costumes have adopted the two holidays which allow dressing up and masking, Hallowe'en and Mardi Gras, as special times. They have become almost national holidays in our community, and we know each other behind the masks and understand, in some deep place, an even deeper reason for them. We, who have had to "wear the mask" now do so in fun and frivolity. At other times of the year, we do it with far more seriousness. God sees behind the mask and knows the pure in heart. Dear ones, Mardi Gras is our season; live, love, laugh and be happy. "Hey, mister, throw me something," and since this is Mobile, I hope it's a devil's food Moon Pie!

STEVEN JAMES' TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE, NON-SCIENTIFIC GUIDE TO ILLNESS AND HEALTH: TEN STEP PROGRAMS

by Steven James

I. HOW TO GET SICK

1. Don't pay attention to your body. Eat plenty of junk food, drink too much, take drugs, have lots of unsafe sex with lots of different partners--and, above all, feel guilty about it. If you are over-stressed and tired, ignore it and keep pushing yourself.
2. Cultivate the experience of your life as meaningless and of little value.
3. Do the things you don't like, and avoid doing what you really want. Follow everyone else's opinion and advice, while seeing yourself as miserable and "stuck."
4. Be resentful and hyper-critical, especially towards yourself.
5. Fill your mind with dreadful pictures, and then obsess over them. Worry most, if not all, of the time.
6. Avoid deep, lasting, intimate relationships.
7. Blame other people for all your problems.
8. Do not express your feelings and views openly and honestly. Other people wouldn't appreciate it. If at all possible, do not even know what your feelings are.
9. Shun anything that resembles a sense of humor. Life is no laughing matter!
10. Avoid making any changes which would bring you greater satisfaction and joy.

II. HOW TO GET SICKER (IF YOU'RE ALREADY SICK)

1. Think about all the awful things that could happen to you. Dwell upon negative, fearful images.
2. Be depressed, self-pitying, envious, and angry. Blame everyone and everything for your illness.
3. Read articles, books, and newspapers, watch TV programs, and listen to people who reinforce the viewpoint that there is NO HOPE. You are powerless to influence your fate.
4. Cut yourself off from other people. Regard yourself as a pariah. Lock yourself up in your room and contemplate death.
5. Hate yourself for having destroyed your life. Blame yourself mercilessly and incessantly.
6. Go to see lots of different doctors. Run from one to another, spend half your time in waiting rooms, get lots of conflicting opinions and lots of experimental drugs, starting one program after another without sticking to any.
7. Quit your job, stop work on any projects, give up all activities that bring you a sense of purpose and fun. See your life as essentially pointless, and at an end.
8. Complain about your symptoms, and if you associate with anyone, do so exclusively with other people who are unhappy and embittered. Reinforce each other's feelings of hopelessness.
9. Don't take care of yourself. What's the use? Try to get other people to do it for you, and then resent them for not doing a good job.
10. Think how awful life is, and how you might as well be dead. But make sure you are absolutely terrified of death, just to increase the pain.

← FROM PWA NEWSLETTER, N.Y. N.Y.

MCC AT MOBILE
AIDS BUDDY PROGRAM
1987
FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME	
Grants	$1000.00
Fundraisers	2039.27
Contributions	715.00
Total	$3754.27

DISBURSEMENTS	
Prescriptions	437.48
Med. Supplies	20.00
Prof. Nurses	860.00
Home Care	60.00
Rent (PWAs)	800.00
Utilities (PWA)	194.76
Phone (PWA)	285.33
Insurance Pmt.	102.66
Burial Cost	257.25
Floral	44.67
Turkeys-T'giving	40.00
Membership- N'tl AIDS Network	100.00
Printing	45.46
	$3247.61

GMHC PUBLISHES TREATMENT ISSUES

New York City's Gay Men's Health Crisis has begun to publish a free monthly newletter, called Treatment Issues, designed to explore experimental and alternative therapies for AIDS. Articles will be written in easy-to-understand language, and footnotes will list pertinent studies and references for further reading. Dr. Barry Gingell of GMHC is the editor. If you wish to receive Treatment Issues free of charge, write: GMHC, Department of Medical Information, Box 274, 132 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011.

BUDDY TRAINING is held every 3rd Monday of the month. If you would like to be a Buddy or attend a Buddy Training Program, please call us at 476-9142 and we will plan a time for you to attend and find out more about what the Buddies do for people with AIDS. Care for the Caretaker is a program to help provide emotional support for the buddies who are caring for people with AIDS.

III. HOW TO STAY WELL (OR GET BETTER, IF YOU'RE NOT SO WELL TO BEGIN WITH)

1. Do things that bring you a sense of fulfillment, joy, and purpose, that validate your worth. See your life as your own creation, and strive to make it a positive one.
2. Pay close and loving attention to yourself, tuning in to your needs on all levels. Take care of yourself, nourishing, supporting, and encouraging yourself.
3. Release all negative emotions--resentment, envy, fear, sadness, anger. Express your feelings appropriately; don't hold onto them. Forgive yourself.
4. Hold positive images and goals in your mind, pictures of what you truly want in your life. When fearful images arise, re-focus on images that evoke feelings of peace and joy.
5. Love yourself, and love everyone else. Make loving the purpose and primary expression in your life.
6. Create fun, loving, honest relationships, allowing for the expression and fulfillment of needs for intimacy and security. Try to heal any wounds in past relationships, as with old lovers, and mother and father.
7. Make a positive contribution to your community, through some form of work or service that you value and enjoy.
8. Make a commitment to health and well-being, and develop a belief in the possibility of total health. Develop your own healing program, drawing on the support and advice of experts without becoming enslaved to them.
9. Accept yourself and everything in your life as an opportunity for growth and learning. Be grateful. When you fuck up, forgive yourself, learn what you can from the experience, and then move on.
10. Keep a sense of humor.

CDC YEAR-END REPORT

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported 49,743 AIDS cases in states and US territories, as of Dec. 28, 1987. This figure reflects the newly expanded CDC definition of AIDS; 2700 patients were added as a result of the revised definition.

Of the 49,743 diagnosed AIDS patients in the U.S., 25% are Black, 14% are Hispanic, and 1% are Asian, Native American or of unknown racial group. Gay and bisexual men account for 65% of all AIDS cases, 17% are IV drug abusers and 8% are both Gay and IV drug abusers. Hemophiliacs account for 1%, transfusion cases represent 2% of all cases, and 4%, or 1,964 cases are a result of heterosexual transmission. Patients for whom risk information is incomplete, as well as men who only had heterosexual contact with a prostitute account for 3% of all cases.

The top five states in prevalence of AIDS cases are (in order) New York (13,171), California (10,954), Florida (3,623), Texas (3,465), and New Jersey (3,143). The metropolitan areas reporting the largest number of AIDS cases include New York City (11,961), San Francisco (4,433), Los Angeles (4,072), Houston (1,654) and Washington, DC (1,541).

LATEX CONDOMS SAFER

Dr. Marcus Conant, a San Francisco researcher, has stated that the type of condom used can make a difference in protecting a person from HIV infection. Laboratory studies show that HIV will not pass through a latex condom, while natural membrane or skin condoms are riskier because of the pores in the condoms that allow the virus to pass through.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration stresses that even with a latex condom, they must be used properly and must not be torn in order to be effective. The FDA recently tested over 54,000 latex condoms, representing a large variety of brands, and found that 20% failed to meet FDA standards.

However, Conant stresses that latex is a much surer safeguard than any other kind of condom.

GAY COMMUNITY
HELP LINE &
AIDS HOT LINE

476-9142

"Call Us...We Can Help"

TEST TUBE EXPERIMENT HAILED AS BREAKTHROUGH

In test tube experiments, CD4, a synthesized protein, has been shown to inhibit the ability of the AIDS virus to bind with healthy immune system cells. Scientists from four major research institutions have independently confirmed these results. The findings, published in the British science journal NATURE, were researched by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Biogen Research Corp., both of Boston, Smith Kline & Frence Corp. of Pennsylvania, and the Basel Institute of Immunology in Switzerland.

It is hoped that the protein can be used in creating a drug that would prevent the HIV virus from damaging infected people's immune systems.

BUDDY BUILDING TO BE DROP-IN CENTER FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS

Beginning Saturday, February 20th the Buddy Building at 1600 Center Street will be open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for people living with AIDS to drop in for conversation, a nourishing lunch, and relaxation. There is no charge, and people are invited to come by and make themselves comfortable. You will be asked no questions, the Buddies will be there to serve lunch and clean up, and if you need advice, etc., people will be around to talk to. People with AIDS are invited to talk with each other, network, and compare notes, if that's what they want to do. It's your day -- we're providing the space for you to use it as you choose. TV, games, cards, etc. will be available.

In Memoriam

Ken Jones died of AIDS January 13, 1988. He was MCC at Mobile's first deacon and a constant strength and support to the leadership of this church. He was also our first lay delegate to our District. On a trip to District Conference Ken coined the acronym GLAD for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District, which used to be SAD, the South Atlantic District. Ken felt that no Christian should be SAD, and additionally wanted to remind the Fellowship that we had churches on the Gulf Ken could and did provoke controversy, but he always made us think, and often made us think about our faith. He will be missed. A memorial service for him is planned for February 19th at 7:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

CHURCHES

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH AT MOBILE 476-9142
1600 Center Street (at Lambert Avenue)
Sunday Services: 7:00 P.M.
AIDS Buddy Training: Third Mondays, 7:30 P.M.
Bible Study: Tuesdays, 7:30 P.M.(call for location)
Rap Discussion Group: Wednesdays, 7:30 P.M. (call for location)

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH 342-6834
6345 Old Shell Road (west Mobile)
Sunday Services: 10:45 A.M.

BARS

TROOPERS 438-9139
215 Conti Street

SOCIETY LOUNGE 433-8184
51 South Conception Street

CORRAL 433-9258
54 South Conception Street

GOLDEN ROD 433-9175
219 Conti Street

CLUB PARK AVENUE 433-9103
7 South Joachim Street

ORGANIZATIONS

METROPOLITAN WRITERS GUILD 342-7891

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SKETCH GROUP 342-7891

THE ALABAMA FORUM (Monthly Periodical)
P. O. Box 55913, Birmingham, Alabama 35255

MCC • MOBILE NEWSLETTER (Monthly Periodical) 476-9142

RESOURCES

MOBILE AIDS FUND 433-5292
P. O. Box 1491, Mobile, Alabama 36601

AIDS BUDDY PROGRAM 476-9142
Operated by the Metropolitan Community Church of Mobile

NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE (202) 332-6483
1517 U Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR AIDS RESEARCH (212) 333-3118
40 West 57th Street, #406, New York, N.Y. 10019

AIDS CRISISLINE (800) 221-7044
Staffed 2:00 - 8:00 P.M. Eastern Time, Monday-Friday

PARENTS OF GAYS (904) 433-8528
415 North Alcaniz, Pensacola, Florida 32597

February

14 JOE CAIN Deacon's Break fast at 1600 Center St. 10:30 a.m. $2.	15	16	17 ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE 7:30 p.m.	18 Mobile AIDS Support Svces. at Unit. Univer. Fellowship 7:30	19 Memorial Service For Ken Jones 7:00	20 Drop-In Center 10:30-4:00 Free Lunch Every Sat. PWAS
21 WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY 1600 Center St 7:00 p.m.	22 Buddy Training 7:30 Overcoming our Losses	23 LENTEN BIBLE STUDY 7:30 Sin: Love Spurned	24 RAP What do I think about my body? 7:30	25 DEACON TRAINING 7:30 Embracing the Exile	26	27 RED CROSS Home Nursing 9:00 to 4:00 Part II
28 WORSHIP 7:00p.m.	29 CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER	1 LENTEN BIBLE STUDY God's Initiative	2 RAP Nonverbal Communication What am I saying with my body?	3 M.A.S.S. at Unit.Univers. 7:30	4	5 MOVIE NIGHT AND POTLUCK 7:00
6 WORSHIP 7:00 p.m.	7	8 LENTEN BIBLE STUDY 7:30 Responsibility	9 RAP Flirting -- Using my body to entice.	10DEACON TRAINING	11 Church Leadership Social with Jimmy Brock	12 ANNIVERSARY DINNER 7:00
13ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL WOR-S HIPSERVICE	14	15 LENTEN BIBLE STUDY Sexual Sin OR...	16 RAP Keeping my body healthy.	17	18	19 DROP IN CENTER 10:30-4:00 Free Lunch PWAS

March

Ain't gonna ~~let nobdy turn me around~~
Turn me around, turn me around
Ain't gonna let nobdy turn me around
Keep on a walkin', keep on a talkin'
Gonna build a brand new world.

Ain't gonna let the mora majority
Turn me around, turn me around, turn me
around, Ain't gonna let the moral majority
trun me around, Keep on lovin Jesus,
Keep on praising Jesus, Gonna build a brand
New world.

Ain't gonna let Jerry Falwell turn me around,
turn me around, turn me around.
Ain't gonna let Jerry Falwell turn me around
Because Jesus love me, just as I am,
Gonna build a brand new world.

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,
Turn me around, turn me around
Ain't gonna let ~~nobody~~ turn me around
Keep on a singin', keep on praising
Gonna build a brand new world.

How many roads must some one
Walk down before you can reach
Out your hand. Yes 'n' How many
names can our God be called before
We start to understand? Yes 'n'
How many times can wars break out
Before there's peace in our lands?

CHORUS: The answer my friends is our
standing hand in hand. The answer
is our standing hand in hand.

How many times must Third World people
Look up before they can see the
sky? Yes 'n' how many ears must
This world have before we can hear
Each other cry? How many wars will
It take 'til we know that too many
People have died?

CHORUS

How many years can hunger exist
Before we just cease to be? Yes 'n'
How many years can our people exist
Before we're allowed to be free?
Yes 'n' how much longer can we turn
Our heads pretending we just don't
See?

THE CATHOLIC CENTER
Archdiocese of Mobile
400 Government St., P. O. Box 1966, Mobile, Alabama 36633, (205) 433-2241

January 28, 1988

Reverend Marge Ragona
Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile
1600 Center Street
Mobile, Alabama 36604

Dear Reverend Ragona:

I would like to acknowledge your comments and do appreciate your sending me a copy of your letter to the editor with respect to the article by Vivian Cannon in the January 19th issue of The Mobile Register on our annual Catholic Charities Appeal.

There was no intention on my part, and certainly not on the part of anyone who spoke at the press conference, to denigrate the Mobile Metropolitan Community Church which is on the cutting edge of outreach and ministry to those touched by AIDS, whether directly or through family or other association. My observations with respect to our endorsement of your faith community were made against a background of several other entities mentioned in the press conference (St. Mary's Home, Little Sisters of the Poor, Catholic Social Services, etc.) which are not only endorsed by our Church but are in fact officially sponsored and in large part funded by us. For reasons of obvious dissimilarity in both religious principles and practice, I felt it entirely in order to make a remark which would clarify a relationship that might easily have been misunderstood.

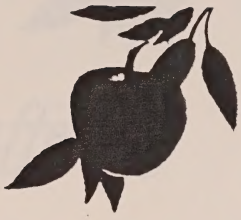
Certainly those of your faith persuasion are to be commended and supported in their compassionate consideration for and treatment of those who have a special need for acceptance and care. I am sure that the wider community of the Metropolitan Community Church is aware of serious and substantial efforts on behalf of AIDS victims by the Catholic Church in such large centers as New York and San Francisco. To the extent that our circumstances and resources permit it in our area, we stand with you in doing our best to alleviate the human dimension of pain and suffering that touches AIDS victims locally.

Faithfully in Christ,

+Oscar H. Lipscomb

Most Reverend Oscar H. Lipscomb
Archbishop of Mobile

+OHL/k



Temperance

Where there is an open mind, there will always be a frontier.

The longer you keep your temper the more it will improve.

It's smart to pick your friends—but not to pieces.

Fine eloquence consists in saying all that should be, not all that could be said.

Wise men are not always silent, but know when to be.

We always have time enough if we but use it aright.

Spend less than you get.

Frugality is good if liberality be joined by it.

It's not that I spend more than I earn, it's just that I spend it quicker than I earn it.

Long suffering

Much wisdom remains to be learned, and if it is only to be learned through adversity, we must endeavor to endure adversity with what fortitude we can command. But if we can acquire wisdom soon enough, adversity may not be necessary and the future of man may be happier than any part of his past.

Education is a companion which no misfortune can decrease, no crime destroy, no enemy alienate, no despotism enslave; at home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, in society an ornament. It chastens vice, guides virtue, and gives grace and government to genius. Education may cost financial sacrifice and mental pain, but in both money and life values it will repay every cost one hundred fold.

There is a field for critics, no doubt, but we don't remember seeing statues of any of them in the Hall of Fame.

Meekness

Have courage to be ignorant of a great number of things, in order to avoid the calamity of being ignoranf of everything.

The only conquests which are permanent, and leave no regrets, are conquests over ourselves.

Resiliency is an important factor in living. The winds of life may bend us, but if we have resilience of spirit, they cannot break us. To courageously straighten again after our heads have been bowed by defeat, disappointment and suffering is the supreme test of character.

To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.

The best medicine for you to take is yourself—with a grain of salt.

It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow necked bottles—the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out.